(b) if so, the details of action Government are taking against such negligent officers, and the reasons for not attending the complaints made by people on time; and

(c) the reasons for certain telephone numbers getting out of order repeatedly and the details of complaints registered from January, 2004 till date and the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does Not arise in view of (a) above

(c) The fault rate and fault clearance in Roharu Telephone Exchange is satisfactory. However, a few telephones are getting out of order repeatedly as these are working on long overhead alignments passing through thick forests and orchards. These alignments get affected due to inclement weather and sometimes are also tampered by villagers. The restoration is done promptly in case of any fault.

1543 complaints were registered from 1st January, 2004 to 30th November, 2004 which were attended to within reasonable time.

French Foreign Minister's India visit

2264. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any breakthrough has been made during the visit of French Foreign Minister with regard to the pending issues;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether there would be any cooperation between two countries in regard for enhancing civilian nuclear interests; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) and (b) During the French Foreign Minister's visit to India in October, 2004 we reviewed bilateral relations and exchanged views on regional and international issues cf mutual concern.

(c) and (d) In the context of India's future energy needs, both sides discussed the possibility of cooperation in civilian nuclear energy. Technical issues in this regard are being examined by concerned officials on both sides.

Revision of Rules relating to Haj Pilgrimage

2265. DR. AKHILESH DAS: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have lately decided to revise the rules and guidelines relating to facilities granted for Haj Pilgrimage;

(b) if so, the main aspects thereof to be revised; and

(c) the main charges and modifications to be introduced as a result thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) to (c) The Government recently reviewed the facilities granted for Haj Pilgrimage with regard to subsidy in air fare and have removed discriminatory conditions with regard to the number of pilgrimages in one's life time, status of the pilgrim as an income-tax payee and use of accomodation provided by the Haj Committee. Non income-tax payees will get higher priority for availing of subsidy in air fare.

Pendency of passport applications

2266. SHRI LEKHRAJ BACHANI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of applications for grant of new passport or applications for renewal of passports pending in various passport offices in the country;

(b) whether the regional passport offices have been increased from 21 to 30 whereas staff strength has not been increased inspite of increase in the number of passports;

(c) whether all India passport employees association has made representation to the Government; and

(d) if so, what are their demands?